

Message Text

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ACTION PM-04

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C O N F I D E N T I A L COPENHAGEN 2983

ALSO FOR EUR/NE AMBASSADOR DEAN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM MASS MILI DA

SUBJECT: HARPOON PROGRAM FOR DENMARK

SUMMARY: THE HARPOON SUFACE-TO-SURFACE MISSILE APPEARS IDEALLY SUITED TO DANISH NAVAL NEEDS. HOWEVER, RECENT DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN OFFICIALS OF THE U.S. MISSION AND HIGH-RANKING DANISH MILITARY OFFICERS REVEAL THAT THE LATTER ARE SERIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE ABILITY AND WILLINGNESS OF THE USG TO SUPPLY THE HARPOON IN A QUANTITY AND WITHIN THE TIME FRAME NECESSARY FOR THEIR NAVAL FLEET MODERNIZATION PROGRAM. IN ADDITION, THE DANISH CHIEF OF DEFENSE HAS RECENTLY WRITTEN A LETTER TO GENERAL BROWN REQUESTING ASSISTANCE IN SPEEDING UP NECESSARY DOCUMENTATION AND HAS VOICED HIS APPREHENSION TO THE CHARGE THAT THE HARPOON PROGRAM FOR DENMARK MAY BE DELAYED. WE URGE THE EARLY DISPATCH OF THE PRICE AND AVAILABILITY SCHEDULE REQUESTED BY THE DANES AND NEEDED FOR THE FINAL DECISION WHETHER TO GO AHEAD ON CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS PRIOR TO A DANISH DEADLINE OF MID-NOVEMBER. END SUMMARY.

1) AFTER HAVING MADE THE DECISION IN FEBRUARY 1975 TO
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INITIATE PROCUREMENT OF HARPOON, THE DANES HAVE BEEN

ATTEMPTING, ALBEIT AT TIMES SOMEWHAT AWKWARDLY, TO OBTAIN FIRM PRICE AND AVAILABILITY DATA. THEIR INTENTION NOW IS TO PROCURE THE SHIPBOARD LAUNCHING EQUIPMENT FROM MCDONNELL DOUGLAS AND THE MISSILES THROUGH U.S. FOREIGN MILITARY SALES (WHICH IS REQUIRED). THE DANISH FEDERATION OF INDUSTRY HAS BEEN ENGAGED IN PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS WITH MCDONNELL DOUGLAS CONCERNING CO-PRODUCTION, AND ON OCTOBER 3 THE DANISH NAVAL MATERIEL COMMAND SIGNED A LETTER OF INTENT WITH MCDONNELL DOUGLAS WHICH WILL ALLOW MORE FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS TO TAKE PLACE ON THE INDUSTRIAL SIDE.

2) WHEN AND IF A LETTER OF OFFER AND ACCEPTANCE FROM THE USG CONCERNING THE MISSILES IS SIGNED BY THE ROYAL DANISH NAVY, A FIRM CONTRACT WITH MCDONNELL DOUGLAS WILL BE SIGNED IMMEDIATELY. THE DANES WISH TO PURCHASE INITIALLY 19 HARPOON MISSILES AND CANNISTERS, WITH THE FIRST 8 TO BE DELIVERED BETWEEN FEBRUARY 1, 1978 AND MARCH 31, 1978. THE REMAINING 11 MISSILES ARE TO BE DELIVERED AT A RATE OF APPROXIMATELY 2 PER MONTH STARTING IN APRIL 1978.

3) WE UNDERSTAND THAT AT A SEPTEMBER 12 MEETING IN WASHINGTON BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ROYAL DANISH NAVY AND U.S. CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS, THE DANES WERE INFORMED THAT IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO OBTAIN CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL FOR THE FOREIGN MILITARY SALE OF HARPOON. THEREFORE, THE LETTER OF OFFER AND ACCEPTANCE WILL PROBABLY NOT BE RECEIVED HERE BEFORE LATE NOVEMBER 1975.

4) DANISH NAVAL OFFICIALS CONTINUE TO STRESS THAT THEY ARE WORKING AGAINST A MID-NOVEMBER DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF A REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS FOR HARPOON. THE BACKGROUND OF THIS HEADLINE IS NOT WHOLLY CLEAR TO US BUT APPARENTLY IS REAL AND INCLUDES FACTORS SUCH AS THE CONCLUSION OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH MCDONNELL DOUGLAS FOR THE SHIPBOARD LAUNCHING EQUIPMENT MENTIONED ABOVE. THE DANES TELL US THAT THEY INTEND TO USE THE INFORMATION IN THE PRICE AND AVAILABILITY LETTER AS THE BASIS FOR THE REQUEST FOR THE RELEASE OF FUNDS FOR THE MISSILES. (NORMALLY SUCH A REQUEST WOULD AWAIT THE RECEIPT OF THE LETTER OF OFFER AND ACCEPTANCE.) CONSEQUENTLY, IT IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT THAT THE DANES RECEIVE THE PRICE
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AND AVAILABILITY LETTER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

5) ON SEPTEMBER 29, THE DANISH CIEF OF DEFENSE, GENERAL OTTO BLIXENHRONE-MOLLER, ADDRESSED A LETTER TO GENERAL GEORGE BROWN, CHAIRMAN OF U.S. JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF. BLIXENKRONE-MOLLER OUTLINED DANISH EFFORTS TO PROCURE HARPOON AND VOICED HIS APPREHENSION THAT FURTHER DELAYS IN PROCUREMENT PROCEDURE MAY JEOPARDIZE THE HARPOON PROGRAM FOR THE DANISH

NAVY. A SIMILAR APPREHENSION WAS RECENTLY EXPRESSED BY BLIXENKRONE-MOLLER TO THE CHARGE AT A BRIEFING, WHEN DANISH WORRIES ABOUT WARSAW PACT MAVAL MANEUVERS WERE VENTILATED.

6) COMMENT: THE HARPOON APPEARS TO US TO BE THE RIGHT WEAPON AT THE RIGHT TIME FOR THE DANISH NAVY. ARMED WITH THIS MISSILE, THE CAPACITY OF THE DANISH NAVY TO FULFILL ITS NATO MISSION IN THE BALTIC APPROACHES WILL BE ENHANCED GREATLY. FURTHERMORE, THE DANES AS NATO ALLIES ARE UNDERSTANDABLY PERPLEXED OVER THE PROBLEMS THEY ARE ENCOUNTERING IN ATTEMPTING TO MAKE THEIR MODEST PURCHASE AT THE SAME TIME THAT THE U.S. APPEARS TO BE PLANNING TO FURNISH A LARGE NUMBER OF HARPOONS TO NON-NATO COUNTRIES. IN THE FACE OF FUNDING PROBLEMS BEING EXPERIENCED BY MANY NATO COUNTRIES, WE BELIEVE THE DANES DESERVE PRAISE FOR THEIR SIGNIFICANT MATERIEL MODERNIZATION PROGRAM AND STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT THEIR DESIRE TO OBTAIN HARPOON IN A TIMELY FASHION NOT BE FRUSTRATED.
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